Google Blames Publishers for Bad Ad Experiences? by @martinibuster

Google published an article in their “Think with Google” blog that wagged their finger at bad user experiences related to ads. The article touted how it’s ad program adheres to the “Better Ads Standards.” The implication is that any ads that are bad do not originate from Google’s network. Yet the article does not once address privacy, a form of intrusion that’s a legal focus in Europe and the USA.

If Google is a part of the Coalition for Better Ads and adheres to the suggestions that Google helped create, then it follows that the criticisms in Google’s articles are aimed at rival ad networks and the publishers themselves.

What Publishers Need to Know

The article is titled, “What publishers need to know now about creating a better ad experience.” The article then lists intrusive ad experiences as reasons why users might object to ads.

Strangely, there is no mention about privacy. The reason why I say that is strange is because Europe passed the GDPR privacy rules in 2018 and California passed the Consumer Privacy Act of 2018 that takes effect in January 2020.

Both laws affect the kind of data that is collected by advertising brokers such as Google and Facebook.

Targeted advertising is the most lucrative form of advertising. They can target you by gender, geography and even sites that you have visited. Privacy may be the most important

aspect of Internet advertising today by consumers. If is so important that Europe and California passed laws severely reining in the kind of data companies like Google and Facebook can collect.

Considering that Internet privacy is so important, it is odd that Google published an article about the things that publishers do to annoy site visitors. It's almost like Google and the advertising industry itself that came up with the Better Ads Standards is trying to encourage sites to walk away from intrusive advertising models while perpetuating the lucrative surveillance advertising model.

Google's blog post states:

> *"For years, the user experience has been tarnished by irritating and intrusive ads. Thanks to extensive research by the Coalition for Better Ads, we now know which ad formats and experiences users find the most annoying. Working from this data, the Coalition has developed the Better Ads Standards, offering publishers and advertisers a road map for the formats and ad experiences to avoid."*

Annoyance has been an issue to users and may be why they have employed ad blockers. Google is a part of the Better Ads Coalition and conforms with their rules.

Thus, violations of the advertising standards are solely by publishers and competitor advertising networks. This article is aimed outside of Google and finger points directly at publishers.

The strange thing about this article is that legislators from Europe to the USA are focused on Internet privacy. The legal focus is not on the inconvenience of popups and poor user experience but in the "creepy ads' that follow users from site to site.

It is a glaring omission of this blog post to focus on “intrusive ads” instead of privacy issues. Surveillance advertising is a lucrative area of Internet advertising. Yet, this article does not discuss it.

The laws passed in Europe and California deal with surveillance advertising. So what is the point in discussing “intrusive” advertising in the form of pop ups and interstitials?

If the legal trends are considered, intrusiveness in the mind of consumers may increasingly be about surveillance advertising. So why does Google’s blog post point the finger at publishers for intrusiveness when it’s Google not the publishers that is tracking users from site to site?

Read Google’s official blog post here

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